

Executive Summary¹

1. Introduction

The Lake Street Station Area Master Plan is the first in a series of land use planning studies for transit-oriented development (TOD) around station sites along the 11.5 mile Hiawatha Light Rail Transit (LRT) corridor, Minneapolis, MN.

The area of study includes portions of four residential neighborhoods – Phillips, Corcoran, Longfellow and Seward – located within a ten minute walking distance (1/2-mile radius) of the proposed LRT station situated at the intersection of Lake Street and Hiawatha Avenue.

Existing station area land uses include 500 acres of residential, industrial, commercial civic / institutional and open space. Approximately 20% of the total land area has been identified as having redevelopment potential, with the majority of candidate sites located along Lake Street or adjacent to the Hiawatha transportation corridor.

2. Livable Neighborhoods and Sustainable Futures: Building Consensus

Impacted by the continuing trend to suburban growth at the expense of the inner city and by changes in area demographics and employment base, the Lake Street station area has experienced declining population, jobs and tax base over the past four decades. The introduction of LRT holds the potential to reverse the trend via 'catalyst' TOD initiatives.

Working towards the goal of vibrant, pedestrian-friendly urban environments, Lake Street residents, in a comprehensive public consultation process, agreed that the new rapid transit infrastructure could help achieve the following objectives:

- Improved pedestrian connections between station area neighborhoods and local shopping and employment destinations
- Enhanced neighborhood-serving retail offerings (via mixed-use development along a revitalized Lake Street corridor)
- An expanded local employment base (via selective redevelopment in existing industrial / commercial areas)

¹ This summary differs from the text of the Hiawatha / Lake Station Area Master Plan. It reflects changes directed by the City Council as part of its December 28th, 2001 adoption of the Master Plan. Language may differ slightly from Council direction to preserve document flow and clarity.



- Increased housing opportunities (with an emphasis on diversifying choice and affordability)
- Encourage 'Smart Growth' development linking transportation, land use, economic development and housing

Community objectives were enabled through a series of interactive workshops where residents and stakeholders participated directly in building and refining plans that became the basis for the Preferred Concept Plan.

3. Market Potential and Urban Design Capacity

A companion study of market potential at Lake Street station (ref. Hiawatha LRT TOD Market Study, ZHA-ZVA Consulting Team) estimates that 1,250 housing units and 150,000 square feet of commercial development could be absorbed within the station area over a twenty year timeframe given favorable conditions.

From an urban design perspective (based on an analysis of inherent site suitability and development capacity) the station area could support upwards of 500,000 square feet of new development, realize commercial space development targets greater than market-based estimates and generate more than 430 new jobs.

4. Preferred Concept Plan

Key elements of the long range land use and circulation framework plan are shown on the accompanying Preferred Concept illustration.

In the public realm, the concept plan contemplates:

- Streetscape improvements to Lake Street integrated with street oriented mixeduse development
- Establishment of a 'community circuit' providing pedestrian connections to LRT from each of the four station area quadrants (integrated with the proposed Hiawatha bikeway and Midtown Greenway)
- Civic open space (a public plaza adjacent to the LRT station site)
- Neighborhood open space enhancements (e.g. South High playfields, passive recreational access to the Pioneers & Soldiers Cemetery)
- Preferred land use futures for key sites identified through the community consultation process include:



1. Hi-Lake Shopping Center

A key early development opportunity at the center of the mixed-use TOD core area. The strategic location of this site supports densities in the range of F.A.R. 2.5 to F.A.R. 3.0 for high intensity ground-related residential uses (ranging from 150 to 450 units) mixed with street level retail fronting Lake Street and connected directly to the LRT station. Special accommodations are made for transit transfer at street level, in the vicinity of $22^{\rm nd}$ Avenue and Lake Street. The extension of the Hiawatha pedestrian path and bikeway parallels the elevated LRT guideway and connects to a transit plaza and the north access to the LRT station spanning Lake Street.

2. Edison / PPL School Site

The demonstration plan indicates comprehensive redevelopment of this site in a manner similar to the built form proposals for the Hi-Lake Shopping Center site. Retail and commercial office uses are indicated along the south side of Lake Street with direct linkages to LRT. Multi-family residential buildings arrayed along the perimeter of the site stepping down in height towards the 31st Street neighborhood edge. Open space is preserved in the block interior.

3. West Lake Street

Existing marginal commercial properties are shown redeveloped with liner buildings (i.e. street-fronting mixed-use development featuring at-grade retail with apartments above).

4. Corcoran Residential Infill

Lands surplus to the LRT alignment are proposed as infill townhouse development adjacent to established single family residential areas. The site overlooks the new Hiawatha bike route with convenient access to LRT.

5. South Phillips Industrial

Existing uses contributing to the local employment base are preserved in the long-range vision for intensification of industrially based employment opportunities. The existing City Transfer Station structure is retained for future community use.

6. Bituminous Roadways Site

Asphalt plant operations have outgrown this site. Given its strategic location on the proposed Midtown Greenway, redevelopment to townhouse type residential uses designed to conform to the sloping terrain represent the highest and best use. Before significant public funds are committed to redevelopment activities on the site, initial environmental studies should be done to determine the nature of contamination and the cost of clean up for reuse as a Greenway oriented residential development. Current industrial may be maintained if no agreements are reached between Public Works and Bituminous Roadways on the possibility of a joint asphalt production facility on Site 7.



7. North Phillips Industrial

Land use proposals include: reconstruction / expansion of the existing Public Works yard; new light industrial and office commercial uses north of 28th Street; police station (relocated from Lake Street); environmental remediation of vacant industrial lands and new open space adjacent to Hiawatha Avenue.

8. Seward Industrial

Industrial park uses presently developed in the Seward Place Business Park are shown expanded into surplus lands adjacent to the Hiawatha transportation corridor. A similar form of development is proposed for commercial lands between 27th Street and 28th Street, east of 26th Avenue. Landscaped surface parking and storage areas are integral to the development concept.

9. East Lake Street Regional Commercial

Existing large-format shopping center retail is supplemented with smaller commercial retail units developed as freestanding pads or liner buildings fronting Lake Street and 26th Avenue. Surface parking areas are landscaped.

10. East Lake Street Mixed-Use

Mixed retail and residential uses similar in type and scale to the built form proposed for West Lake Street are proposed as infill projects together with renovation of selected commercial structures.

11. East Lake Entertainment Zone

A neighborhood cinema and related entertainment venues are contemplated for the south side of Lake Street opposite the East Lake Street Regional Commercial shopping center zone.

12. Longfellow Residential Infill: 26th Avenue and 32nd Street

Two key locations along the neighborhood pedestrian community circuit have been identified as potential townhouse or live-work housing sites: along 32nd Street at Minnehaha Avenue (the gateway to the Longfellow neighborhood); and along 26th Avenue across from the shopping center. Any future opportunities to diversify the land use and supplement its current industrial base should be promoted, as both sites complement the idea of providing alternative residential living close to the LRT station.

As with 26th Avenue, 32nd Street at Minnehaha is a key location along the neighborhood pedestrian community circuit. Present day land uses are industrial and expected to remain in the near future. Over time, changes to the site that improve the pedestrian environment and the amount of street-related activity should be promoted whenever possible.

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Catalyst Development

Conditions favoring development are substantially in evidence in the Lake Street station area. Aided by transit-supportive corridor policies and incentive programs, implementation of TOD should take advantage of early opportunities associated with the construction of LRT as a first priority.

On the strength of its strategic location adjacent to the north access to the LRT station and potential contribution as a seed project for Lake Street commercial revitalization, the Hi-Lake Shopping Center qualifies as a catalyst TOD site. Site suitability and development capacity studies suggest that a mix of rental apartments/senior housing, condominium apartments and live-work townhouses could be accommodated in a phased development program that would also support neighborhood-serving retail uses.

At a net developable area of 5 acres and two times site coverage (i.e. average F.A.R. 2.0), total development capacity is in the order of 450,000 square feet or approximately 3.5 times the present density. The preferred range of potential new development for the site has been identified at no less than 150 and no more than 450 new housing units, and between 50,000 and 150,000 square feet of retail in some form of blended mixed use on the site. This development could be accommodated in ground related buildings ranging from three to six stories in height. Lake Street improvements should be completed concurrent with the target date for completion of the first phase of development to enhance marketability and provide a high amenity environment for subsequent phases.



Implementation

To promote a transit-oriented character of development, prevailing regulations that govern land use, development densities, parking location and ratios, building orientation, setbacks, height and open space provisions will be required. It is anticipated that new development regulations will be applied in the form of a TOD overlay district designed specifically to promote mixed-use development, neighborhood redevelopment and rehabilitation, and pedestrian-oriented design.

The Lake Street overlay district boundaries should correspond to the 1/2-mile radius prescribing the station area plan limits and include for the following provisions:

• Development Density:

Within the core mixed-use TOD zone, densities in the range of F.A.R. 2.0 to F.A.R. 3.0 are recommended, with higher densities proposed adjacent to the LRT station site. Commercial and residential densities outside the 1/4-mile radius from the station (excluding the east side of Hiawatha Avenue) can range up to F.A.R. 0.25 / 50 jobs per acre and 35 dwelling units per acre.

Parking:

Parking requirements for 'walkable' access to shopping, recreational and civic destinations should be substantially reduced to reflect a corresponding reduction in required vehicle usage for local trips. For regional destination-oriented uses, it is recommended that current minimum parking requirements be initially discounted by 15% to 20% to reflect parking demand offset by transit access. In the early stages of TOD, requirements should be reviewed on a project-by-project basis to establish ratios that are appropriate to the intended uses and location.

Building Setbacks:

For street-fronting development sites, buildings should generally be sited at or within five feet of a street and occupy at least 80 percent of each block's linear street frontage.

• Building Height:

The maximum height of buildings should not exceed the limits for ground-related built form or 6 stories above grade. The principles of transitional zoning suggest a height gradient from 2 to 4 stories adjacent to established single family residential areas rising to the maximum allowable height adjacent to the LRT station site.

• Open Space Requirements:

On-site open space requirements should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Open space 'credits' may be considered for sites in close proximity to public open space. Where buildings are sited more than five feet away from a street, connecting landscaped walkways should be provided.

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Non-Conforming Uses:

Minor changes to existing land uses proposed for redevelopment over the long term should be subject to a supplementary landscaping requirement to provide visual screening from adjacent uses (where land use incompatibilities exist). Improvements to site access and internal landscaping of parking lots may also be required in support of pedestrian-oriented development objectives.